

NONFICTION: "The Burning Town" • SKILL: Reading Comprehension

"The Burning Town" Quiz

Directions: Read "The Burning Town." Then answer the multiple-choice questions below.

1. What is the main idea of the section

"A Bustling Town"?

- (A) Coal mining is dangerous and deadly.
- (B) Nobody realized that the fire underneath Centralia was emitting poisonous gases.
- (C) Once Centralia's coal mines closed, residents had a hard time earning a living.
- (D) The coal mines brought people to Centralia and also created an environment for fire to thrive.

2. Which sentence best supports the author's statement that the fire spread "like a virus"?

- (A) Anthracite is a form of coal that burns quickly.
- (B) The fire was invisible above ground.
- (C) Toxic gas leaked through cracks in the ground.
- (D) The fire fed off air and coal in the tunnels.

3. Consider this sentence from the article:

"Ominous signs warn curious visitors about sinkholes and poison gases."

Context clues reveal that *ominous* means

- (A) dreary. (C) unfriendly.
- (B) shocking. (D) threatening.

4. Based on the article, what would most likely have happened if Todd had not fallen into the sinkhole in 1981?

- (A) No one would have known the fire was there.
- (B) The ground would have collapsed under someone else.
- (C) The governor would never have ordered a mandatory evacuation.
- (D) Centralia would be thriving today.

5. Which quote from the article best supports your answer to question 4?

- (A) "All that was left to do was get everyone out."
- (B) "Meanwhile, a vicious debate raged among residents and politicians."
- (C) "Today, Centralia is a ghost town."
- (D) "... perhaps it was only a matter of time before disaster struck."

6. "When Coal Was King" is an example of which literary device?

- (A) hyperbole
- (B) foreshadowing
- (C) metaphor
- (D) simile

7. Which sentence from the article is an opinion?

- (A) "Then the area that would become Centralia was wild and lush."
- (B) "But Earth's climate was changing."
- (C) "'It was awful scary,' Todd told reporters."
- (D) "Mining is brutal work."

8. Why does the author include information about the history of coal?

- (A) to describe how humans figured out they could use coal for energy
- (B) to persuade the reader that coal is necessary for survival
- (C) to provide context for the existence and importance of the coal mines in Centralia
- (D) to raise the question of whether the coal mines in Centralia were necessary

Directions: Write your answers on the back of this paper or type them up on a computer.

9. How did Todd's accident change the way the residents of Centralia reacted to the underground fire? Use text evidence in your answer.

10. How did events that occurred 300 million years ago contribute to Todd's accident? What does this suggest about the impact of events that occur today?